

# Germans from Russia: Published Records and Indexes for Black Sea Germans

Russia “How to” Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

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## GOAL

This guide will teach you how to use online resources to locate published records and indexes for your Black Sea German ancestors.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to access published records and indexes for Black Sea Germans, you must first understand a bit about where your ancestral hometown was located, and which religious and political jurisdictions existed at the time that your ancestor lived there. These jurisdictions play an important role in record keeping and preservation. In order to determine these jurisdictions, you may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- Germans from Russia: Locating the Town with Websites and Gazetteers
- [Finding German Colonies](#)

Over 50,000 Germans migrated to Russia and formed colonies above the Black Sea in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some came and settled the area shortly after Catherine the Great’s manifesto in 1762; however, the vast majority of Black Sea Germans arrived following Tsar Alexander I’s invitation in 1804. The Black Sea German colonies can be broken down into five different geographic areas: Bessarabia, Crimea/Taurida, Dobrudscha, Ekaterinoslav, and Odessa.

Although many research principles and record types are similar, each area is unique. To read a research guide on your specific area, visit <http://www.blackseagr.org>. Click on the **Learn** tab. In the left-hand column under the title **Researching in South Russia**, you will find links to research guides for each of the five regions. The guides provide a brief geographical overview and information about common record types and availability as well as useful research links and recommended readings.

## HOW TO

Once you have determined the important religious and political jurisdictions for your German colony in Russia and learned about the history of the area your ancestors lived in, it is now time to begin research. Because many Germans from Russia genealogical records were kept in either German or Russian, indexes are a great place to start. There are four main record types: compiled genealogies, church record indexes, revision list indexes and Einwandererzentralstelle (EWZ, or Immigration Control Center) indexes. Each record type will be discussed in further detail below.

## Compiled Genealogies

Before beginning your genealogical research in the Black Sea area, it is important to determine what research has already been performed by other family members or researchers. After consulting your own family sources, turn to online compiled genealogies to discover research performed by others. Investigating this research allows you to prevent duplication, collaborate with others and connect with your family. However, keep in mind that information included in these sources is secondary and will require research in original records to verify the data.

- **Black Sea German Database:** This database is an excellent first step in searching for your Germans from Russia ancestors. To access the database, visit <http://www.blackseagr.org>. The **Black Sea German Database** is available on the right-hand side of the main page. You can search using just the first and last name or click on **Advanced Search** to search using additional information including gender, birth/christening, death/burial and spouse's last name. If no results are found, adjust the search terms by trying alternating spellings, or selecting options such as "contains," "starts with" or "ends with" from the drop-down menu. Sort through the search results and make note of new or additional information. Be sure to pay special attention to the sources the researcher used to build their family tree – these citations not only provide credibility, but they can help you locate the original records later in your research. For a deeper discussion of the *Black Sea German Database*, and how to contribute your own data, consider reading "[Q&A on Using the Black Sea German Database](#)."<sup>1</sup>
- **Online Trees:** You may also find it useful search public member trees on online databases such as *FamilySearch Family Tree*, *Ancestry*, *MyHeritage*, or *Geni*.
- **Village Coordinators:** Many German colonies have village coordinators, or individuals with extensive knowledge of a specific colony, who often know about common families and/or surnames in the area. Village coordinators can be located through genealogical societies or a web search.<sup>2</sup>

## Church Record Indexes

German colonists were granted the freedom of religion, and as a result, German colonies consisted of a variety of different religious groups including: Evangelical Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonites and Hutterites. Although there was a wide array of religious diversity, this guide will focus on two of the major religious groups: Evangelical Lutheranism and Catholicism.

In 1819, all Lutherans in Imperial Russia were united into a single Evangelical Church. Several

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<sup>1</sup> Gayla Aspenleiter, "Q&A on Using the Black Sea German Database," Black Sea German Research, [www.blackseagr.org](http://www.blackseagr.org).

<sup>2</sup> For more information about village coordinators, please visit:  
*American Historical Society of Germans from Russia*, <http://www.ahsgr.org>.  
*Germans from Russia Heritage Society*, <http://www.grhs.org>.

years later, in 1832, the General Evangelical Lutheran Consistory was formed, which was divided into eight consistorial districts, one of which was the St. Petersburg Consistory. The St. Petersburg Consistory covered the northern, western and southern areas of the Russian Empire – including the Black Sea region.<sup>3</sup>

Black Sea Catholics, on the other hand, were members of the Archdiocese of Mogilev, which was formed in 1772. In 1849, the Diocese of Kherson, and a few years later, a third diocese, the Diocese of Tiraspol was created.<sup>4</sup>

Both Catholic and Lutheran church records were kept by the individual parish, and transcripts, or duplicate copies, were sent to central diocese or consistorial offices for safe keeping. Indexes of original and transcript church record indexes for both Lutherans and Catholics are available through the following sources:

- **Black Sea German Research:** To locate church record indexes, visit <http://www.blackseagr.org>. Under the **Research** tab, select one of two options: **Area/town/village specific** or **Church/Parish**. An entry with a red asterisk (\*) indicates that the item has recently been added to the website. The site is updated regularly, so be sure to check back often for new information. Clicking on the underlined link will open up a PDF which can often be searched using the Ctrl-F feature. To use this feature, simply press the keys *Ctrl* and *F* (or *Command* and *F* for Mac users) at the same time and a search box will appear. Type what you are looking for in the search box and it will locate the corresponding text on the page.
  - **Area/town/village specific** is divided up into several different geographical areas. Underneath each heading, you will find links to indexes and records available for specific towns or parishes within the area. For example, under the heading **Dobrudscha**, select **Jakobsonsthal births 1843-1879**. This is an index of birth/baptism records for the village of Jakobsonsthal.
  - **Church/Parish** is a list of available church and parish registers in Germany, Russia and the United States. For example, click on **Diocese of Tiraspol Roman Catholic Church Death Records** to find indexes of Roman Catholic church records for various locations in the Black Sea.
- **Odessa Digital Library:** Visit <http://www.odessa3.org> and from the main page, select **Collections**. Church records can be found under the headings **Bessarabian Collection**, **Church Records**, or **St. Petersburg Archives**.
  - **The Bessarabian Collection** is a great tool for research in Bessarabia. Within the Bessarabia Collection are several folders. Click on the name of a town/parish to access indexes or try searching the **Bessarabian Index** – an index of Bessarabian church records.

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Kent Edlund, *The Lutherans of Russia* (Germanic Genealogical Society of St. Paul: St. Paul, Minnesota, 1994), xiii.

<sup>4</sup> "The Catholic Church Records of South Russia," *Black Sea German Research*, [www.blackseagr.org](http://www.blackseagr.org).

- **Church Records** contains links to parish register indexes primarily in the United States; however, there are a few records from German colonies in Russia. Check to see if your locality is contained in this collection.
- **St. Petersburg Archives** contains indexes from the Lutheran Duplicate Church Book records collection in St. Petersburg (Lutheran). This collection is organized by region.
- **Russia, Lutheran Church Book Duplicates, 1833-1885:** Duplicates of records kept by individual Lutheran parishes were sent to the consistorial office in St. Petersburg. These duplicate records were stored in the Russian State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg and are now indexed and available through *FamilySearch*. To access this indexed collection, visit <http://familysearch.org/search/collection/1469151>. Search for your ancestor using identifying information such as first and last names, or birth, marriage and death information. This collection is only partially indexed and does not reflect all of the duplicate church book records microfilmed by the Family History Library. If you are unable to find your ancestor, they may not have been indexed yet. Try searching the Odessa Digital Library St. Petersburg Archives indexes (mentioned above).
- **FamilySearch Family History Library:** The Family History Library has a large collection of resources available to assist you in your Germans from Russian research. Search the catalog by visiting <http://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>. In the **place** box, type in the name of your village, and select the corresponding entry from the drop-down box. Use English, Russian and German spelling variations as well as any alternate names you found throughout your previous research in online sources and gazetteers. Church book indexes can be found under the section entitled **Church records – Indexes**. For example, searching for Glückstal, returns no results; however, by using an alternate name – Glinnoye, there are three options for church record indexes. Some FamilySearch books have been digitized; however, some are only available at the Family History Library. These books may be available at other locations – check <http://worldcat.org> or contact your local public or university library for more information.
- **Village Coordinators:** If your ancestor's town has a village coordinator, contact them for more information about locating church record indexes. They may have personal copies or can direct you to where to find them.
- **Web Search:** Use a search engine such as <http://www.google.com> to search for church record indexes. Type the [name of village or parish, Russia, church records] into the search box.

## Revision List Indexes

Aside from church records, revision lists (*revizkiye skazki*) are some of the most important records for Germans from Russia genealogical researchers. Revision lists were tax lists created by the Russian government to identify taxpayers. There were ten revisions, or enumerations, taken sporadically between 1719 and 1858. German colonists in Russia were included in several of the later revisions. Like U.S. censuses, these records list each member of the family and provide names, ages and relationships. These records are oftentimes referred to as census lists, however, this guide will refer to them as revision list records. These records are written in

the Russian language; however, some records have been transcribed and translated and are available through online resources and published works.

- **Black Sea German Research:** This site has several revision list indexes available. To access census indexes, visit <http://www.blackseagr.org> and from the main page, select **Research** followed by **Area/Town/Village Specific**. This section is organized by area. Find the heading for your area and look for entries that contain “census.”
- ***The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the years 1763 to 1862* by Dr. Karl Stumpp:** Nicknamed the “Stumpp Book,” part two of this reference book includes indexes of revision lists in the Black Sea area, although it does not have complete data for Bessarabian colonies.<sup>5</sup> Revision list entries begin on page 499 and are organized by region and then alphabetically by town. This work is available at the Family History Library reference shelf or online if you are using a computer in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.<sup>6</sup> This source is also free for members of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia in a searchable PDF format.<sup>7</sup> To learn more about using this book to locate your ancestors, read [“Q&A on Using the Stumpp Book.”](#)<sup>8</sup>
- ***Black Sea German-Russian Census, Volumes I-II:*** Also known as the “Stumpp Supplements,” these reference book includes revision list indexes for areas not included in the original Stumpp book. Volume one includes indexes for the Odessa-area villages and is available at the Family History Library reference shelf or may be available at a library near you.<sup>9</sup> Volume two includes revision list data regarding Bessarabian villages.
- **FamilySearch Family History Library:** The Family History Library has a large collection of published transcriptions of revision lists. Search the catalog by visiting <http://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>. In the **place** box, type in the name of your village, and select the corresponding entry from the drop-down box. Use English, Russian and German spelling variations as well as any alternate names you found throughout your previous research in online sources and gazetteers. Revision list indexes can be found under the subheading **Census**. If you are unable to visit the Family History Library, check <http://www.worldcat.org>

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<sup>5</sup> To see which Bessarabian villages are included within the Stumpp book, visit [http://www.grhs.org/chapters/bess/faqs.htm#SUGGESTED\\_READING](http://www.grhs.org/chapters/bess/faqs.htm#SUGGESTED_READING).

<sup>6</sup> Karl Stumpp, *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the years 1763 to 1862*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1982), FHL 943 W2sk1978.

<sup>7</sup> For more information regarding the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia PDF option, please see <http://www.ahsgr.org/page/Join>.

<sup>8</sup> Gayla Aspenleiter, “Q&A on Using the Stumpp Book,” *Black Sea German Research*, <http://www.blackseagr.org>.

<sup>9</sup> *Black Sea German Russian Census: Supplemental to the “Stumpp Book,”* (Bismarck, North Dakota: Germans from Russia Heritage Society, 2003), FHL 947X28 v.1.

or contact your local public or university library to find published revision list indexes.

- **Black Sea German Database:** If an online census index is not available and you are not able access the books described above, check to see if your ancestor is included in the Black Sea German Database. Revision list information may have been added as a source from someone who had access to these works.
- **Genealogical Societies:** Revision list transcriptions may also be available to purchase through major genealogical societies such as the Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) or the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR). Although both have great sources available, GRHS tends to focus on Black Sea Germans more so than AHSGR. See their websites for more information.<sup>10</sup>
- **Village Coordinators:** Contact your town's village coordinator to see if they have any information regarding revision list records. Village coordinators can be located through a web search, or through genealogical societies.
- **Web Search:** Use a search engine such as <http://www.google.com> to search for church record indexes. Type the [name of village, Russia, census or revision list records] into the search box.

## Einwandererzentralstelle (EWZ) Indexes

EWZ stands for **Einwandererzentralstelle**, or the Immigration Control Center. EWZ records were created between 1939 and 1945 as ethnic Germans escaped the Soviet Union to resettle in Germany. EWZ records contain a wealth of information including forms that contain names, birth date and place, last place of residence, names of parents and/or children and their birth and death dates as well as a pedigree chart. Additionally, certificates including passports, other forms of identification and birth, baptism and marriage records are often included in these files. The original EWZ records are available at the National Archives, the Family History Library or the Germans from Russia Heritage Society, but indexes are accessible online. To learn more about EWZ records, read "[EWZ Questions and Answers.](#)"<sup>11</sup>

- **Odessa Digital Library** Visit <http://www.odessa3.org> and from the main page, select **Collections**. On the top of the page, select **Full Text Search**. Type the surname into the box labeled **Query String**. Under **Data Category**, select **War Records** and then click on **Submit Query**. Information indexed varies, but will typically include a name, date, location and reference to the original microfilm. To view the complete index and column headings, click on the blue hyperlink above the desired index. For example, searching for the surname of **Langolf** brings up three results in the **EWZ Index for Miscellaneous Films 148**. Click on the blue hyperlink and search for the surname using the Ctrl-F feature.

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<sup>10</sup> American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, <http://www.ahsgr.org>.  
Germans from Russia Heritage Society, <http://www.grhs.org>.

<sup>11</sup> Elli Wise, "EWZ Questions and Answers," *Black Sea German Research*, <http://blackseagr.org>.



## PRACTICE

Use the following guided examples below to learn how to publish compiled genealogies and indexed church, revision list and EWZ records through online sources.

### Compiled Genealogies

- According to family tradition, Michael Ritz was born in 1859 in Tarutino, Akkerman, Bessarabia, Russia. Visit <http://blackseagr.org> and under the **Black Sea German Database** located on the right-hand side, select **Advanced Search**. Type the following information into the search box:
  - First Name: Michael
  - Last Name: Ritz
  - Gender: Male
  - Birthplace: Bessarabia
  - Birth Year: 1859
- Hit **Search** and you will find two entries for Michael Ritz. According to the first entry, he was born 7 January 1859 in Tarutino and died 6 March 1912 in Alberta, Canada. There is also information regarding his parents and marriage date. The second includes more information including the name of his spouse and a reference in the notes section as to where the information was found.

### Church Record Indexes

- **Russia, Lutheran Church Book Duplicates, 1833-1885:** Search for the Lutheran baptismal record of Karl Schneider, who was born 1850 in Großliebental (also known as Neu-Liebenfeld), Odessa, Kherson, Russia.
  - Access the collection online at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1469151>. In the search box, type in **Karl Schneider**, born **1850** in **Odessa**. The index showed that he was baptized 25 November 1850 and was the son of Georg Schneider and Rosina Knoblich.
- **Black Sea German Research:** Locate the death index of Francisca Kiefer who died in 1878 in Katharinental. Her Catholic parish was Katharinental, within the diocese of Tiraspol.
  - Go to <http://blackseagr.org> and click on the **Research** tab. Next, select **Church/parish** and find **Diocese of Tiraspol Roman Catholic Church Death Records**. Francisca belonged to the Katharinental parish, so choose **Katharinental 1865-1880**. This index can be searched using the Ctrl-F feature. Push *Ctrl* and *F* on your keyboard at the same time (or *Command* and *F* for Mac users). In the search box that appears, type in the surname **Kiefer**. Francisca's entry is number 18 on page 11. According to the index, she died 27 October 1878 in Katharinental at age 23 of Typhus. She was the daughter of Jakob Kunz and was survived by her husband Franz Kiefer and daughter Magdalena.

## Revision List Indexes

- **Black Sea German Research:** Locate a revision list index for the Johann Behr family. Johann Behr resided in Groß-Werder in 1858. Groß-Werder is located in the Ekaterinoslav area.
  - Visit <http://blackseagr.org> and click on **Research**, then **Area/Town/Village Specific**. Look for the geographic area heading of **Jekaterinoslaw** and select **Gross Werder 1858 Census**. The format of this index is unable to be searched using Ctrl-F, instead, scan the pages for the surname **Behr**. It is important to remember that spelling variations can occur as a result of transliteration, in this case, Behr was transliterated as Ber. The Behr family can be found on page two, household number three. Johann, age 66, presides at the head of household. Several children, adopted children, and grandchildren also live in the household.

## EWZ Indexes

- **Odessa Digital Library:** Locate the EWZ index for Barbara Ritz who was born 8 June 1922 in Emmmental.
  - Go to <http://odessa3.org> and from the home page, select the **Collections** option. Next, click on **Full Text Search**. In the search box, type in the surname – **Ritz**. From the **Data Category** drop-down menu, select **War Records**. Use Ctrl-F to locate **Barbara** on the page. Sift through the entries until you find one with an 8 June 1922 birthdate.

## ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! Click [here](#) to try out the Activity.